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S P E E C H

OF

HON. W. A. RICHARDSON, OF ILLINOIS.

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MAY 19, 1862.

The House being in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, Mr. RICHARDSON said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I desire this morning to submit a few remarks for the consideration of the House and the country. It is not my purpose to discuss questions pertaining to the army already in the field, which, if judiciously officered and managed, is able to crush out the rebellion. I shall direct my attention, therefore, to the consideration of some of the many new questions which are continually arising during the progress of this terrible civil war.

Mr. Chairman, there is a manifest anxiety, an overweening desire, a persistent purpose upon the part of prominent members of the dominant party in this Government, to place upon terms of equality and make participants with us in the rights of American citizenship an inferior race. The negro race, which is incapable of either comprehending or maintaining any form of government—by whom liberty is interpreted as licentiousness—is sought to be exalted, even at the cost of the degradation of our own flesh and blood.

We all remember with what intense satisfaction a recent order of the Secretary of State, Mr. Seward, one of the chief clerks of the President, was received in certain quarters, because it declared that no fugitive slave should be retained in custody longer than thirty days, unless "by special order of competent civil authority."

That I may do no injustice to the head of the State Department and his unwarranted assumption of power, I quote the official paper itself:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, January 25, 1862.

SIR: The President of the United States being satisfied that the following instructions contravene no law in force in this District, and that they can be executed without waiting for legislation by Congress, I am directed by him to convey them to you:

As marshal of the District of Columbia, you will not receive into custody any persons claimed to be held to service or labor within the District or elsewhere, and not charged with any crime or misdemeanor, unless upon arrest or commitment, pursuant to law, as fugitives from such service or labor; and you will not retain any such fugitives in custody beyond a period of thirty days from their arrest and commitment, unless by special order of competent civil authority.

2.

You will forthwith cause publication to be made of this order, and at the expiration of ten days therefrom you will apply the same to all persons so claimed to be held to service or labor, and now in your custody.

This order has no relation to any arrests made by military authority.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM H. SEWARD.

While Mr. Seward was issuing this order for a general jail delivery of the negroes; he was also sending, under a usurpation of power, and in violation of the laws and the Constitution, hundreds of white men and women to fill the cells of the prisons in this District and throughout the loyal States. Against many of these white men and white women thus incarcerated by this despotic Secretary of State, no charge has ever been made; they are imprisoned without the form or authority of law, and thus the personal liberty of the Caucasian is ruthlessly violated while the African is most tenderly and carefully guarded, even to the nullification of State enactments and the national statutes. Let a rumor become current that a negro has been deprived of personal liberty—either in this District or anywhere else—and there are dozens of Republican members upon this floor striving to obtain the attention of the House while they may offer resolutions inquiring by what law, by whom, when, and where, these objects of their undivided affections may have been arrested. But never yet has any one of those philanthropic gentlemen made inquiry for the law or the authority under which white American citizens have been kidnapped by the State Department, dragged from their homes, and left to pine and die, perchance, in some of the many bastiles which this Administration has established.

It is well known, sir, that if any white citizen, perhaps a father or brother, desires to visit a relative or acquaintance in the military service of this Government, that he is obliged to secure a "pass" from some competent authority; and to obtain this, he is required upon his honor to declare his loyalty and fidelity to the Government. But the negro goes and comes within the lines of our Army without a pass, whether his destination be towards or from the enemy; the color of the black man is his passport, and is received as equivalent to the pledge of honor and of loyalty upon the part of a white person.

In this District you have abolished slavery. You have abolished it by compensation, by adding \$1,000,000 to the national debt, and a tax of \$73,000 to be paid annually, as interest upon this sum, by taxes imposed upon the laboring white people of these States. Not satisfied with doing this much for your especial favorite, you extend the freedom of this city and the hospitality of the Government to all the runaway negroes in the country who choose to visit the District of Columbia. You issue rations to them day after day, and week after week, rations which must be paid for through the sweat and toil of tax-ridden white men. You are thus supporting in indolence hundreds upon hundreds of black men. How many and at what cost I am unable state, because when a resolution, asking for this information, was introduced by the honorable gentleman from Ohio, (Mr. Cox,) it was immediately tabled by the Republican majority upon the other side of this House. Those gentlemen not let this information

go to the country; they shrink from the exposure which a truthful reply to such inquiry would make. The resolution of Mr. Cox also asked for the number of negroes employed as teamsters in the Army, and at what wages; but this was equally objectionable, for it would have illustrated the fact that negroes by the hundred are receiving better pay as drivers than our own white sons and brothers are for periling their lives as soldiers in the defence of the Union and the Constitution.

Having been thus deprived of obtaining official information upon these questions, I am obliged to gather my statistics from such sources as I can. I shall make no statement that I have not received from respectable and responsible parties, and none which I do not conceive to be rather under than over the true estimate.

The Government is to-day issuing rations to about two thousand negroes in this District alone, that cost over twenty cents per ration — \$400 per day, in violation of law, is being paid for this purpose. The Government is hiring in the District several hundred negroes, some as teamsters and some for other purposes, to the exclusion of white laborers, thousands of whom, together with their wives and children, in our large cities are suffering for the want of employment. I speak advisedly when I say that the Republican party are already paying, of tax-gathered money, in this District alone, over three hundred thousand dollars per annum to buy, clothe, feed, and exalt the African race. Thus for the negro you expend more in a single year in the District of Columbia than you appropriate for the government and protection of all the people in all the organized Territories of the United States. The negro is made superior, in your legislation, to the pioneer white men that settle the great West, and, amid hardships and dangers, lay the foundations of new commonwealths; the hardiest and noblest men of our common country.

So the people are taxed yearly more for the benefit of the black race in this District alone than it costs to maintain the burdens of State government in either Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Delaware, or Maryland.

But it is not in this District alone that you require the people to pay tribute to the idol of your affections. Wherever you find our Army, with one or two honorable exceptions, you will find that hundreds of rations are being issued daily to unemployed negroes who rendezvous in and about the camps; wherever the Army is they are being employed in various capacities at good wages, and to the utter exclusion of white labor that now languishes in irksome idleness throughout our country. I state, therefore, and I think truthfully, that the Government is already paying \$100,000 per day for the support and employment of negroes—paying it, too, out of money raised through the toil, deprivations, and taxation of our own kith and kin.

In my district, Mr. Chairman, my constituents are selling corn at eight cents per bushel in order to support their families and maintain the honor and integrity of our Government. Shall money thus raised and for such a purpose be diverted to the entertainment of the Afri-

can? Will my people, will the people anywhere, indorse the party and the Administration that thus seeks the elevation of the negro even at the cost of ruin to their own race?

One might suppose that your ardor in the care and protection of the negro would stop and cool here; but no, you go still further. Having made him your equals as a civilian, you now seek to place him on the same level with American sailors and soldiers. First came the order of the Secretary of the Navy, Mr. Welles, as follows:

NAVY DEPARTMENT, April 30, 1862.

SIR: The approach of the hot and sickly season upon the southern coast of the United States renders it imperative that every precaution should be used by the officers commanding vessels to continue the excellent sanitary condition of their crews. The large number of persons known as "contrabands" flocking to the protection of the United States flag affords an opportunity to provide in every department of a ship, especially for boats' crews, acclimated labor. The flag officers are required to obtain the services of these persons for the country by enlisting them *freely* in the Navy, with their consent, rating them as boys, at eight, nine, or ten dollars per month, and one ration. Let a monthly return be made of the number of this class of persons employed on each vessel under your command. I am respectfully, your obedient servant,

GIDEON WELLES.

Under the plea of the approach of the sickly season, Mr. Welles issues this order; under the same plea the negro may be called into any service in the South, though the sickly season, but the terrible effect it might have upon our Army and Navy was not thought of by any Republican official until very recently.

Having made this progressive step in our Navy, (as my colleague from the Bureau district [Mr. LOVEJOY] would call it,) it remains to be emulated in our Army. Not long does it await an imitator; General D. M. Hunter, commanding in the military department of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, issues an order to enroll companies, regiments, and brigades of negroes in the military service of the United States.

Thus, in less than two years after the accession to power of the Republican party, the negro is made, as far as possible, the equal of the white man as a civilian, a sailor, and a soldier. Nay, more than this, the Constitution is violated that white men may be bereft of guaranteed rights. White men are stripped of the armor of American citizenship in order that the negro may be clothed therein. All this has been done against the earnest protest of all conservative men. And propositions and amendments to bills, appropriating money for the suppression of the rebellion, which provided that no moneys should be diverted either to the freeing, the support, or the enlistment of negroes, have been invariably voted down by the Republican party in this House.

Worse than this even, General Hunter, in his zeal for the negro, withdraws the protection of his army from the loyal citizens of Jacksonville, Florida, in order to perfect his great negro boarding house and African military academy at the mouth of the Savannah river. This is undoubtedly in harmony with his brilliant discovery that African slavery and martial law are incompatible. Common minds have heretofore considered martial law and slavery, either for whites or blacks, among the most concordant institutions upon earth. This

proclamatory commander, who vies in profundity with the immortal General Phelps, undoubtedly considers martial law the very jewel casket of American liberty.

My mind, Mr. Chairman, revolts at the idea of degrading the citizen soldiery of my country to the level of the negro. Sir, the American volunteer has always been our reliance in peace, and our vindication in war. I am opposed, and you will find the volunteer army of the Union opposed, to the equalization in the ranks of citizens and slaves. Having made such efforts for the negroes of the United States, it would seem that your zeal in their behalf would lag and languish. But, no; you now go wandering among the islands of the sea and over the continents of the globe in pursuit of negro principalities and republics which you may recognize among the Powers of the earth. Hayti and Liberia furnish further matter for your infatuation to fatten upon, and you at once proceed to establish diplomatic relations between the United States and these benighted and half-made parodies upon human government.

At an annual expense of thousands of dollars, you propose to receive negro diplomats from them and send United States ministers to them; indeed are you the champions of negro equality, without regard to cost, place, propriety, or dignity.

This Congress has been in session nearly eight months, and all that I have reviewed you have done, and more you would do if you could, for the negro. What have you accomplished for the white man? Have you provided for the payment of pensions to the soldiers who have been disabled while fighting the battles of your country? Have you appropriated money to relieve the wants and necessities of the widows and orphans of white men who have perished upon the battle-fields defending the Constitution and the flag of the country? Ah, no; your time has been too much engrossed with the negro to think of these things. You have not appropriated one dollar for these purposes—purposes which should enlist the ability and the sympathy of every patriot in the land.

If this statement is incorrect; if this Republican party or its Administration have ever made a single effort in behalf of the maimed soldiers, a single appropriation for the support of the orphans and widows of slain soldiers, I hope some gentleman upon the other side of the House will correct me. There is no response, and I am reassured in the correctness of my assertion by your silence. The alleviation of the sufferings of white men or the protection of their rights is not in your line of philanthropy. Like your illustrious prototypes, Mrs. Jellaby, of the Bori-bo-la-ga mission, or the Rev. Aminidab Sleek, in the play of the Serious Family, to the political branch of which you abolitionists will soon belong, your sympathies are never active in behalf of practical and genuine benevolence.

Mr. Chairman, I am opposed to all these sickly schemes for equalizing the races. God made the white man superior to the black, and no legislation will undo or change the decrees of Heaven. They are unalterable as the laws of nature, eternal as divinity itself, and to legislate against them leads us to infidelity and ruin. Since creation dawned, the white race has improved and advanced in the scale of

being, but as the negro was then, so he is now. "But," say the abolitionists, "the African has been blessed with no opportunity for improvement." Who gave the white man an opportunity? God, in his infinite justice, placed the two races upon the earth at the beginning of time to work out their respective destinies. History has faithfully recorded their achievements. To that impartial tribunal I confidently appeal for the verification of the white man's superiority. As God made them so have they remained, and unlike the abolition equalizationists I find no fault and utter no complaint against the wisdom and justice of our Creator.

The evils of the attempted equalization of the races is illustrated by the history of Mexico. That country was settled by the intelligent Spaniard, a race not inferior to our own ancestors. They developed the resources of the country by building roads, highways, and canals. All along their line of march the church and the school-house were erected as landmarks of their progress. But finally the idea of the equalizing of the races became popular; the attempt was made, the races were commingled, and thenceforward the deterioration of the people was rapid and fearful. This holds true not only in Mexico and throughout Central and Southern America, but in all sections of the globe wherever the white race has commingled with the black or the Indian. This system of equalization has failed to elevate the inferior, but has always degraded the superior race. On the other hand, wherever the purity of the white race has been preserved, its superiority has continued, and its development, both mental and physical, progressed. Neither soil or climate, upon this continent or elsewhere, has ever lowered the standard of the governing race.

For three quarters of a century the United States have led the van in all that is great or useful in inventions. We have made an errand boy of the lightning; we have applied steam as a propelling power. In a single year we have demonstrated the frailty of "England's wooden walls" by the construction of our iron-clad ships of war, and at the same time, by the same thought, dissipated all previously entertained opinions of sea-coast and harbor fortifications. Sir, I am satisfied with the history of the races as they are, as they were created, and as our fathers legislated for them. I claim no originality for these thoughts; they have been entertained by some of the ablest statesmen, not only of our country, but of England, among them Mr. Channing, who, when the British Parliament was considering schemes kindred to those now occupying the attention of the Republican party in this country, said:

"In dealing with the negro, sir, we must remember that we are dealing with a being possessing the form and strength of a man, but the intellect only of a child. To turn him loose in the manhood of his physical strength, in the maturity of his physical passions, but in the infancy of his uninstructed reason, would be to raise up a creature resembling the splendid fiction of a recent romance, the hero of which constructs a human form, with all the corporeal capabilities of man, and with the thews and sinews of a giant; but being unable to impart to the work of his hands a perception of right and wrong, he finds too late that he has only created a more than mortal power of doing mischief, and himself recoils from the monster he has made."

One of their great statesmen of to-day, Lord John Russell, whenever he alludes to the black race in America and to a change of its

status, talks only of very gradual emancipation, because he knows that sudden and unconditional emancipation would be destruction to both the negro and the white man. British statesmen opposed immediate emancipation upon the ground of expediency alone. American statesmen should oppose it, not only upon that ground, but also upon the ground that the Constitution gives no power to interfere with the domestic institutions of the several States—no such power either in peace or in war.

But to reach the goal of their hopes, the abolitionists of this country are willing to override expediency, the law, and the Constitution; to destroy the Government itself, in order to emancipate at once all the slaves of the South.

My colleague (Mr. LOVEJOY) says two-thirds or three-fourths of the Army are abolitionists. This *may* be true, but upon the new constitution for the State of Illinois, which contains a provision to exclude negroes from locating within the State, the soldiers do not vote like abolitionists. Eleven of our regiments have already voted upon the adoption of that constitution.

Mr. WICKLIFFE. How did they vote?

Mr. RICHARDSON. Sixty-three votes were given against it, and all the rest—some several thousand—were given for it.

Throughout the State of Illinois abolitionists are opposing this constitution, and Democrats and conservative men are advocating its adoption.

Four-fifths, and perhaps nine-tenths, of all the men that carry muskets and knapsacks in the army of the West are opposed to the doctrines of negro equality and abolition, as preached by the gentlemen from the Bureau district of Illinois. He is a man of great boldness, apparently, and I must do him the justice to say that he advocates abolition and its consequences with great fearlessness, though he is too discreet to make as strong speeches in southern Illinois as he does at Chicago. He and several other gentlemen of kindred opinions favored me by canvassing through my district during the last campaign that I made for Congress, and it gives me great pleasure to state that they were quite moderate.

A VOICE: Didn't they give you votes?

Mr. RICHARDSON. Well, sir, they were like the boy whom the minister of the Gospel found fishing on Sunday. Said he, "My boy, you are very wicked, you ought not to be sporting upon the Sabbath." "Oli," said the boy, "I ain't doing no hurt, and ain't wicked, for I haven't caught a single fish." [Laughter.] So it was with my abolition friends when they sported in my district; they were not very wicked for they caught no fish. [Laughter.]

Sir, I will not digress, but return to the consideration of the solemn responsibilities that are resting upon us. Our country is menaced by secessionists in arms, rebels, upon one hand, and by abolitionists, nullifiers of the laws and the Constitution, upon the other. Sir, I propose bayonets for the former, ballots for the latter. These two classes disposed of, and there will be a return to the prosperity, the peace and happiness of the earlier days of the Republic. Sir, these armies were raised to execute the laws and maintain the authority of the

Constitution in all the States. They are, sir, to suppress armed violators of that instrument. And sir, it remains for the people at the ballot-box to suppress these northern violators of the Constitution, if they would preserve the rights and liberties of American freemen.

For one, wherever I am called, and whenever, I shall be always ready to discharge my portion of this duty. Neither the cry of disloyalty nor the charge of sympathy with the rebels, whether it emanates from usurpers of the people's rights in high places, or from the base plunderer's of the Government, who make the negro a hobby-horse upon which they ride to enormous and extortionate contracts—neither, sir, shall deter me from the full and complete fulfillment of my duty as a Representative. I denounce here—and no one shall gainsay my right to do so as the Representative of a gallant and loyal people—the action of this Congress and of the several Departments upon the negro question. I denounce it as having neutralized to a great extent the effect of many of the hard-earned victories which our soldiers have fought and won for “the Constitution as it is, and the Union as it was.” This, sir, is what life and happiness has been periled for in the loyal States; for this I now address you; for this, upon this issue, I shall go before the people of my State during the coming fall; for this, sir, I shall expect there to speak, to act, and to vote; for this, sir, I expect that extreme men, abolitionists and disunionists will be banished from the councils of the nation.

This great work accomplished, grim-visaged war will smooth his wrinkled front. The din of arms will be lost in the hum of contented industry and the hymn of domestic endearment. The Constitution as it is will stand sublimely forth, an enduring monument to the wisdom of our fathers; the States restored, like stars that have wandered, to their original places in “the Union as it was;” our people once more on the highway of nations and on the march towards the fulfillment of that grand destiny which God has assigned to them.

All these things I hope for, all these things I shall realize, unless the people are again deceived by abolition under some new name. Under the name of Republican, abolition can do no more harm; in that character its *rôle* is ended. It will next appear in a new dress. Already its leaders are calling loudly for the formation of a so-called Union party—this is indeed an attempt to steal the livery of heaven in which to serve the devil. Let the people, being forewarned, be forearmed against the next appearance of abolition. Trust no such affiliations, for one more success of the abolition party, under whatever name it may assume, and our nationality is lost forever, and the wreck of our Republic will strew the pathway of nations with those of Greece and Rome. From the contemplation of such a future I turn in horror; upon such scenes, Mr. Chairman, I trust my eyes may never rest, over such results never weep.





